A SERMON

PREACH'D at the

Huntingdonshire-FEAST,

JUNE the 26th. 1702.

AT

ST. MICHAEL's CORNHIL, *London.*

By *ANTHONY HILL*,

Lecturer of *Stratford le Bow*, and Chaplain to His Grace the Duke of RICHMOND.

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TO

Sir *Charles Duncomb*, Knt. and Alderman,
The Honourable *Charles Boyle*, Esq;
Peter Pheasant, Esq;
Thomas Cotton, Esq
Capt. *Martin Lacy*,
Mr. *John Newman*,

STEWARDS of the *Huntingdonshire*-FEAST,

GENTLEMEN,

THIS Sermon, *that was first Preach'd at Your Request, and is now Printed, Intreats Your* Candour *in the Reading: And if it*

can any way Promote the Honourable Design of Your FESTIVAL, *I shall think my self Doubly Happy; first, in having had so favourable an Opportunity of Pleading for the* POOR; *and then the Satisfaction of hereby approving my self to be,*

GENTLEMEN,

Your most Affectionate

Humble Servant,

Anthony Hill.

1 COR. xiii. 13.

----- But the greateſt of theſe is Charity.

IN the foregoing Chapter St. *Paul* diſcourſes of thoſe Supernatural Gifts with which God was pleas'd to Endow the Church for the more effectual and ſpeedy Propagation of the Goſpel; and after he had made a recital of moſt of thoſe Extraordinary Qualifications, he exhorts them to *covet earneſtly the beſt Gifts*, thoſe which were likely to be moſt profitable to Others; and then tells 'em, that he will *ſhew them a more excellent way*; *i. e.* he will recommend a Vertue to them, which would have a greater Tendency to promote both their Neighbours Happineſs, and their own, and was more neceſſary and conſiderable than all the reſt; which, in ſhort, was no other than the Practice of *Charity*: For immediately after his Promiſe of ſo great a Diſcovery, he proceeds to ſhew the abſolute Neceſſity of *Charity*, and gives an admirable and pathetical Deſcription of the Excellency of it throughout this 13th Chapter, the

the Conclusion of which is in the words of the Text, *But the greatest of these is Charity.*

To make which Scripture as useful as I can, I shall dispose my Thoughts in this Method:

I. *I shall explain what is meant by* CHARITY.

II. *Shew wherein the Excellency of it consists, and upon what account it is more valuable than* Faith *and* Hope: *And,*

III. *Shall Apply it.*

I. What is meant by *Charity.* As to the Nature of *Charity*, it is such a Principle of Kindness and Benevolence as doth dispose us to do all good Offices, and to be as serviceable to Others as we can, over-and-above that which is their Due by the Laws of Common Justice. I put *Over-and-above that which is their Due by the Laws of Common Justice*, into the Description; because the Office of Justice is to do those things which a Man hath a Civil Right unto; things which he can claim and challenge; things which cannot be deny'd him, without manifest Wrong and Injury. Now this, even the Irreligious and Hard-hearted are capable of

of doing: Nor is this always a Vertue, becauſe it proceeds many times not from Choice, but Neceſſity. But *Charity* is a Tenderneſs and Goodneſs of Soul, which obliges, nay, conſtrains us to do more than what Humane Laws can force us to. It's a Vertue which toucheth the Bowels, that moves and works upon the Affections, that extends our Compaſſion, and enlarges our Hearts beyond the common Limits; a Vertue that enclines us to be Benevolent to the whole Race of Mankind, to wiſh them all the Good their Condition calls for, to be Supplicants for it on their behalf at the Throne of Grace; to aid and aſſiſt them in the acquiſition of it; and for the Love of God, and for Religion-ſake, to help them, and that not only to ſuch things as are really due to Them from Us, but to thoſe things moreover which are neceſſary, fitting and proper for them, though they be not Debts in a ſtrict ſence and conſtruction. Briefly,

It is a Generoſity of Temper that is apt and propenſe to ſuit it ſelf to the Condition of Others, as Opportunity ſhall invite, and according to the Moving Nature of their preſent Circumſtances.

And

And thus the First Particular is dispatch'd, what is meant by *Charity*, what we are to understand by this Vertue. I proceed, in the

II^d place, To shew the *Excellency* of it, from these Considerations following.

(1.) Because the Apostle prefers it to the greatest Natural Perfections of the Understanding, and even before the Miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost. And thus he begins; *Though I speak with the tongues of Men and Angels*: *With the tongues of Men*, *i. e.* Could we speak the Languages of all Nations, were we never so powerful in Elocution, though we could touch the Passions with never so much dexterity and success, though we cou'd talk and preach an Auditory into Hope or Fear, Love or Hatred, Despair or Joy, and command their Affections as we pleas'd; yet if we don't intend their real Benefit; if what we say, is not for a discovery or defence of Truth, for the encouragement of Vertue, or the support of Justice and Innocence; if all this Artifice, Pomp and Force of Words is Mercenary and Designing; whatever Advantage we may pretend to gain by it at present, certain it is it will only serve to discover our Insincerity, and double our Guilt.

Had

Had we (as the Apoſtle proceeds) *the Tongue of Angels*; *i. e.* Knew we how to Converſe with them, were we Maſters of their great Conceptions, their Intuitive and Comprehenſive Knowledge; theſe Perfections, without *Charity*, would ſerve only to heighten our Pride, and proclaim our Vanity the louder; they are but *as ſounding braſs, and a tinkling cimbal*, harſh and hollow, confus'd and noiſie, having nothing either of Worth or Reward in them.

But the Apoſtle goes on; ----- *Though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and underſtand all Myſteries, and all Knowledge*; *i. e.* What if we were Inſpired from Above, and could diſcern the greateſt Events and Revolutions at the remoteſt diſtance, read the Actions of Men before they were born, and diſcover Effects before their Cauſes have ſo much as a Being: What if we could clearly unfold all the Types, all the dark Sentences of the Old Teſtament, and ſhew what relation they had to the New; and thoſe dark Paſſages again of the New Teſtament, what reſpect they had to the Old: Nay, *Though I have all Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains*, do the moſt difficult, and things to Nature

 impoſſible;

impoſſible; yet *if I have no Charity*, don't employ theſe extraordinary Gifts to the Honour of God, and the Benefit Mankind, I am nothing-worth in the ſight of God, or good Men; and better a great deal had it been for me, if I had remain'd an obſcure and contemptible Creature in the World, ſo I had but been Religious, and endu'd with probity of Manners.

(2.) The Apoſtle prefers this *Charity* to the moſt Heroick Acts of Vertue; for, ſays he, *Though I beſtow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and give my Body to be burnt, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

Though a Man be got never ſo much above the love of Money; though he can part freely with his Fortune; tho' he be ſurprizingly Kind and Generous both in the diſtribution and meaſure, dividing what he hath, not among the Rich, but thoſe that are real Objects of Pity and Relief; giving all away at once, without any Reſerves for his own Neceſſities, as if he had rather be poor himſelf, than ſee others ſo; yet if he don't act out of a Principle of *Charity*, if he is at all this Charge purely to be talk'd on, and counted an Extraordinary Perſon; this, in ſtrict ſpeech, is not

not Giving, but Exchange; it's only altering the property of an Eſtate, and turning it into Fame and Reputation: This Perſon muſt not think to be rewarded in the next World; he may, it's likely, have a Good-word in this Life, but that's all he muſt expect; for Our Saviour hath plainly determined the Caſe, *If we do our Alms before men, to be ſeen of them, we have no reward of Our Father which is in heaven.*

And, Laſtly, Though a Man values his Life as little as he doth his Eſtate; though he chuſes to meet Death in its moſt formidable Shape, and *gives his Body to be burnt*; yet if all this Bravery is ſhewn only to make the Croud admire, and ſtand gazing upon him, and ſo be the common Diſcourſe, when he can't have the Satisfaction to hear it; He is no more than a Martyr to his own Pride and Folly, and will be conſider'd accordingly. Nay, if he dies in the Publick Defence of Truth; yet if Popular Applauſe was the Motive, and Vain-glory the cauſe of this his Courage and Reſolution; he hath certainly put the Cheat upon himſelf, and ſhed his Blood in vain: Whereas had this ſame Perſon but acted on Scripture-Principles, with far leſs trouble, he might aſſure himſelf of an Eternal Glorious Reward.

(3.) The Excellency of *Charity* appears from its Properties and Effects, which are deſcrib'd from the 4th to the 8th Verſe.

Charity ſuffers long; *i. e.* A Charitable Man is ſlow to Anger, not preſently ruffled and diſcompos'd, knowing that, for the moſt part, Anger is a Criminal, and may prove an Homicide: And more than this; where he hath been injur'd and ill-treated, he ſuffers long, and forgives much, and deals with others, as he hath experienc'd, and yet hopes God will deal with him.

Again, *Charity is kind*; *i. e.* Eaſie and Benign, Gracious and Courteous, and, as far as may be, Uſeful to All; in one word, Compaſſionate and Beneficent both in Diſpoſition and Action.

Charity envies not; *i. e.* is not diſturb'd at another's Happineſs, does not repine or mutter at any thing wherein another excels

Charity vaunteth not it ſelf; is not Inſolent and Domineering, and arrogantly Impoſing upon Others, as if Wiſdom only dwelt with him. *Is not puffed up*; it keeps a Man from being Pragmatical and Ridiculous, Immodeſt and Arrogant; ſuch an one cannot behave himſelf with Contempt and Scorn towards thoſe whom he looks down upon at a diſtance as his Inferiors. *Doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly*; refuſeth not to do

do the meaneſt offices of Kindneſs, as if it were unſuitable, or below the Chriſtian to be employ'd in them. *Seeketh not her own*; is not Stingy and Mercenary, but hath a reſpect to the Publick Advantage. *Is not eaſily provoked*; is not preſently in a flame, nor exaſperated. *Thinketh no evil*; is not of a Detracting, Cenſorious Humour. *Rejoices not in Iniquity*; is troubled at the Sins and Follies of thoſe he dwells amongſt, who know and are taught better Things, if they would practiſe them: *but rejoiceth in the Truth*; when Men live up to the Goſpel, which, by way of Eminence, is call'd *the Truth*; when Piety and Religion thrive and proſper.

This Vertue *Bears all things*; is not for divulging every fault, though we certainly know it to be ſo. *Believeth all things*; all things that are good and reaſonable for a Man to believe. *Hopeth all things*; it enclines us ſtill to hope the beſt concerning Mens Intentions and Actions, liable to Doubt, and will not let us deſpair of any Ones Repentance and Salvation. *Endures all things*; is never wearied, or tired out. Love is ſtrong as Death. Whatever grievous or afflictive Things may happen to ſuch a Perſon, he endures them (as becomes thoſe that are trained

trained up under a ſuffering Saviour,) with Temper, and Fortitude, and patient continuance in Well-doing. And thus we ſee *Charity* hath an univerſal Influence whereever the Mind is prepar'd to receive it. It ſecures all the parts of our Duty to God, and our Neighbour, (abating for ſome ſudden Surprizes and Inadvertencies incident to Humane Nature;) for *Love is the fulfilling of the Law*; and ſo makes the World an happy place to live in.

(4.) The Excellency of *Charity* appears from its Noble and Diffuſive Quality. It is not confined to particular Nations or Climates. A Benevolent Perſon conſiders all Mankind to be equally ally'd; that Humane Nature is the ſame every where. It's a ſign of a Narrow-Spirit, to love another the leſs, becauſe he came into the World under another Poſition of the Globe, and did not breath the ſame Air with himſelf.

As long as all Men have the ſame Original, the ſame Kindneſs ought to continue, let there be never ſo much Earth or Water lying between the Places of their Nativity. Why ſhould Mountains, or Seas, or Deſarts ſtop the Courſe of Humanity? Why ſhou'd a different Habit, or Cuſtom, or Language, which is only a different Sound in expreſſing our Thoughts, eſtrange our

good

good Wiſhes to one another? Certainly, ſuch Niceties as theſe ought not to diſguſt us, and abate our Charity, when there are ſuch conſtant and unvariable Reaſons for Love and Union. He that is govern'd by this Grace, is of the ſame Opinion with *Socrates*, and *takes himſelf for a Citizen of the World:* He looks upon all People as his Country-men, and treats them accordingly with a becoming Reſpect; and thoſe Perſons whom he can't actually Oblige, he goes yet as far as he can to do it, by his hearty Wiſhes and Prayers for them.

(5.) *Charity* is recommended in the Bible, as much, if not more than any other Vertue; which is another Argument of its Excellency and Valuation. This appears as well from other Places, as from the Chapter before us, which we have all along conſider'd.

St. *John*, for whom Our Bleſſed Lord had ſuch a peculiar Love, has made it the chief Deſign of his Firſt Epiſtle to promote the Practice of this Grace; which he preſſeth not only from the *Nature* of GOD, who is *Love*, and from the Example and Precept of our Great Lawgiver *Jeſus Chriſt the righteous*; but alſo from *this* Argument, That from *hence*, that is, If *herein* we approve our ſelves Excellent, we may

may conclude our ſelves to be in the Favour of God, and to enjoy Communion with him: *Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit*; *i. e.* becauſe we are of the ſame Kind and Generous Spirit with Himſelf.

And for this reaſon, where St. *Paul* exhorts the *Epheſians* to be *Followers of God*, he immediately adds, as a prime Inſtance of his Duty, *Walk in love, as He alſo loved us*, Eph. 5. 2.

Thus in St. *Peter*, 1 Epiſt. 4. 8. we are commanded, above all things, to have *fervent Charity, for Charity ſhall cover a multitude of ſins*: *i e.* God is more enclin'd to forgive Perſons of ſuch a Temper, than any others. Thus 2 Epiſt. 1 5. where he gives a Catalogue of Vertues, he concludes with *Charity*, both as the Crown and Security of them all.

This makes St. *Paul* call it *the Bond of Perfectneſs*; that which cements and knits all other Vertues together, and fixeth 'em upon a firm and immovable Principle: inſomuch that when he had reckon'd up a great many commendable ones, and told us what we ſhould avoid, and what we ſhould do, he recommends *Charity* after a peculiar manner; *Above all things put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectneſs*, Col. 3. 14.

And

And *Rom.* 13. 5, 7. we are told, that *for a good Man ſome would peradventure even dare to die:* i. e. *Charity* hath ſuch an endearing Quality, hath ſuch a charming, and irriſiſtable Influence, that a Man that throughly underſtands it, will reſpect and encourage it, though it be to the greateſt hazard of his Perſon.

And, Laſtly, Our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf makes it the very Badge and diſtinguiſhing Character of a Chriſtian: *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another.* *q. d.* The Rabbies, among the *Jews*, diſtinguiſh their Diſciples, ſome, by giving them Sententious Sayings, a particular way of interpreting the Law; ſome by enjoining a Sett-Habit, or Religious Ceremonies; others by Rules of extraordinary Severity and Mortification: but *You* ſhall be known by a nobler Character and Diſtinction to be my Diſciples, and that is, by your *Candour* and your *Charity*; by your doing Good, and your forgiving Injuries, which narrow and ſelfiſh Principles will never diſpoſe a Man to.

(6.) The Excellency of this Vertue appears from the Perfection of its Nature. And here I ſhall compare it with *Faith* and *Hope*, of which ſo great Things are ſpoken in the

Sacred Leaves; and which, by the Apoſtle's mentioning them together, at the end of his Deſcription, ſeem to be placed in the next degree of Regard and Notice, and to ſtand faireſt for a Competition: And yet *the greateſt of theſe is Charity*; which will be made out, by conſidering what follows.

Faith and *Hope* imply Imperfection. *Faith* ſuppoſeth ſomething not evident: For, notwithſtanding it is an Aſſent to a Truth upon a Divine Teſtimony, and is moſt rationally grounded; yet it is not ſo irreſiſtably convincing as the Evidence of Senſe; it muſt needs fall ſomething ſhort of Mathematical Certainty, in regard it is handed down by an Intermediate and Humane Conveyance.

And as for *Hope*, it implies Futurity; it is an Expectation of Advantage, and keeps a Man at a diſtance from that which he deſires: But *Charity*, in the Exerciſe of it, ſuppoſeth Union, it enjoys the Preſence of its beloved Object, and is in Poſſeſſion of that which it delighteth in. Upon this account it is that there is neither *Faith* nor *Hope* in God; they are not Attributes or Perfections that can be ſaid to belong to him: for He that is the Fountain of all Truth, and knows all things, needs

needs not to rely upon the Teſtimony of another: The Divine Majeſty therefore cannot be ſaid to *Believe*, or to have *Faith*.

And ſo likewiſe is *Hope* inconſiſtent with the Almighty; for He that can do every thing, needs not to hope or wiſh for any thing: but after all, could we ſuppoſe Him under the Circumſtance of being imperfectly happy at any time, yet He could immediately ſatisfie Himſelf, without depending in the leaſt upon any Foreign Aſſiſtance; for He that hath Power equal to his Will, can give Himſelf whatever he pleaſeth. But now, though theſe Vertues are beneath Almighty God, and inconſiſtent with his Independency; yet *Charity* is ſo far from being the leaſt Derogation from the Divine Perfections, that, on the contrary, it is a Quality in which he taketh the greateſt Delight. The Apoſtle tells us, that *God is Love*; he deſcribes Him as though His Eſſence lay chiefly in *this* Attribute; and though all his other Perfections are Infinite, yet Goodneſs ſeems to hold the Balance, to be the moſt active and over-ruling Principle of his Nature.

2. The Exerciſe of *Charity* is more delightful than that of *Faith* and *Hope*, whether we reſpect our Neighbour or our Selves.

1. If we respect our Neighbour. *Charity* either signifies wishing him well, actually obliging or rejoicing in his Happiness.

Now, whereas *Faith* and *Hope* argue us in a state of Imperfection, that our Desires are unsatisfied, and that we are not in the Condition we would be; *Charity* hath the advantage in each branch of the Operation. For, to wish well to another, to interest our selves in the Happiness of our Neighbour, argues something of *Sufficiency*, as well as *Good-Nature*. It's a sign we are contented at home, when we are so well enclin'd to those that are round about us: But then *really* to oblige another, is still the more taking and delightful; for this is not only a Demonstration of Power, when a Man hath something to spare from his own private Interest, but a noble way of entertaining a Man's self; for he that wou'd be glad that there were no such thing as Misery in the World, and desires to make every one as easie and as happy as is possible, cannot chuse but be extremely pleas'd in seeing himself contribute, what lies in his power, towards so worthy Design. By assisting others, he most effectually obligeth himself, because he doth that which his Generous Inclinations are most

dispos'd

diſpos'd to ; and ſees that effected, which he ſo heartily wiſhes, and rejoiceth in.

2. If we reſpect our ſelves, the Exerciſe of *Charity* is more delightful than that of *Faith* and *Hope*.

For though *Faith* and *Hope* are very Generous Vertues, though they are the Effects of a Conſiderate Temper, and ſhew the Man to be willing to ſubmit to Truth, though attended, it may be, with preſent Inconveniencies ; though to govern our Actions by the intereſt of an Inviſible State, and a Future Life, and deny our ſelves a Preſent Pleaſure when it's inconſiſtent therewith, proceeds from great Probity and Integrity of Mind, and argues an excellent Diſpoſition of Soul ; yet theſe Properties of *Faith*, how commendable ſoever, are certain Arguments that we are but on our Way, that our Deſigns are unaccompliſh'd, that we are not Maſters of what we aim at. But *Charity*, when there is nothing to check or interrupt it, is ſuppos'd to have the Poſſeſſion of its Object, and conſequently muſt be a more agreeable Vertue than the other two ; as much as Succeſs is more acceptable than the Proſpect of it, as much as Certainty is to be preferr'd before Probability and Attainment before Expectation and Deſire.

Beſides,

Besides, (7thly, and Lastly,) *Faith* and *Hope* suppose a state of Tryal and uncertainty; for *Faith* may fail, and *Hope* be disappointed; a Man may abuse the Liberty of his Will, grow weary of Well-doing, and apostatize from Goodness: And therefore St. *Paul* cautions those who think they *stand*, to *take heed lest they fall*. But herein lies the Excellency of *Charity*, that it never fails; but after the pleasant Exercise of it in this, is a Victorious and Triumphant Grace in the Divine World, and is blessed with the secure enjoyment of that Happiness which *Faith* only had a Prospect of, and *Hope* wished for.

Charity is of Eternal Duration. *Faith* and *Hope* are calculated for this World only: For though they were design'd to support us under the Troubles of Life, to conduct us through the Wilderness of this World; yet when we come to enter the *promis'd Land*, must, like *Moses*, be content with a Prospect, and die upon the Borders.

But *Charity* is not so short-liv'd; it will last when Time shall be no more, and run parallel with Eternity. This Vertue will be the continual Employment of yonder Heaven; where, tho' *Prophecy shall cease*, because we shall see all things

things in the Beatifick Viſion, and *know as we are known :* Though *Tongues ſhall be done away*, and all reduced to one Univerſal Language ; yet that will be expreſs'd in our Love of God, and our Delight in the General Happineſs.

Indeed, we need not queſtion that *Charity* ſhou'd ever fail, conſidering the Circumſtances 'twill then be placed in : For, where the great Diſturbers of Society will be baniſh'd, where there will be nothing of Ignorance or Folly, nothing of Uneaſineſs or Want, nothing of Peeviſhneſs or Pride, where every one perfectly underſtands, and readily complies with all the ways of Obliging, there Friendſhip and Charity muſt follow of courſe. For how can a Man do otherwiſe than Love, where he always finds the ſame Good-Humour and Temper which he could wiſh ?

After all, (My BRETHREN,) what is here ſpoke in Commendation of *Charity*, is not intended to abate the Value, and diſcourage the Exerciſe of *Faith* and *Hope*. God forbid. Let us rather improve them as far as we can ; for if theſe Vertues be not put in practice, deceive not your ſelves, neither can the other. There is a kind of Circulation amongſt them ;

they

they mutually fortifie, and, as it were, return into one another. For the ſtronger and more vigorous our *Faith* and our *Hope* is, the more ſhall we be diſpos'd to love the Author of our Being and Happineſs: Our Affections will always riſe in proportion to our Aſſurance and Expectation. The more fully that we are perſuaded both that the Thing is, and that it is likely to be ours, the more ſhall we be excited to love and admire the Goodneſs of Him that gives it. And thus it will be in *Charity*: The more intenſe our *Love* is, the more will our *Faith* and *Hope* be confirm'd: Our *Faith* will be founded, as it were, upon a Rock; and our *Hope* will be as the Anchor of the Soul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt.

III. The APPLICATION of the Whole is Addreſs'd to You of this Auditory, who are more particularly concern'd in the Diſtributive Branch of this Vertue of *Charity*.

The principal Deſign of this *Solemnity* (if I miſtake not) is to manage the Concerns of the POOR; to make a Fund for the Supplies of Young People that have Nothing in the whole World to help them; to fix them with

with ſuch Neceſſaries as may employ them; that ſo they may become uſeful in their Generations, and fill up their Places in the World with Decency.

Such a laudable Undertaking (GENTLEMEN) as this, ſpeaks of it ſelf, and ſtands in no need of the force of Words to recommend it. To urge the Exerciſe of this Grace, were, one would think, only, in other words, to deſire you to gratifie your own Good-Nature, and give your ſelves the ſweetneſs and pleaſure of Living.

I ſhall therefore ſuppoſe you in love with your ſelves, and diſmiſs the Argument in two or three words.

And here let us ſtrictly obſerve what the Scripture ſaith in the Point. How read we, *He that gives to the Poor, lendeth to the Lord.* Again, *Bleſſed is the man that conſiders the Poor and the Needy, the Lord ſhall deliver him in the time of trouble.* And, to mention no more Texts, Our Saviour (*Matth.* chap. 25.) tells in what great Account *Charity* will be had at the Laſt Day; and that Men will receive their Final Everlaſting State, according to

the Exercise or the Omission of this Grace.

But to encrease in us a Spirit of *Charity*, let us consider further, That by disposing our Money this way, we reap the Advantage. This way we return our Wealth into the Other World, and make it an Estate for ever: For thus it is not only secur'd against Violence and Fraud, but even against the Accidents of Mortality. Whereas, to bury our Fortune in our Coffers, or lavish it purely to make a Figure, or leave it to the Luxury of an Heir, is a very great Defect in the Management, a miserable Misapplication, and must conclude in Disappointment and Repentance. In short, He that Relieves the Poor, is a Benefactor to himself, and receives much more than he gives.

Besides, *Charity* argues a Compassionate Temper, a Largeness of Soul, and that the Man is bigger than the Money.

And among all the Distributions of *Charity*, that of Providing for Poor Young Children may be as beneficial as any: For *Poor Children*, I say; who, to add to their Misery,

Miſery, have many times not Underſtanding nor Limbs to provide for themſelves: Theſe, though their Parents are living, are almoſt in the Condition of Orphans: For, to have Nothing, and to have Nobody to Relieve them, is almoſt one and the ſame thing.

Thus to aſſiſt the Indigent, to be a Father to the Fatherleſs, is an honourable Inſtance of Beneficence. Now the beſt Proviſion in ſuch Caſes, is, firſt to Inſtruct them; and then put them to Buſineſs, that they may learn to ſtand upon their own bottom, and not to beholden to Others, through their own Honeſt Pains and Induſtry.

Oh, the vaſt and ſtrange Improvements of Induſtry! It makes the moſt of a Man; it gives new Vigour and Activity both to Body and Mind. Early Exerciſe and Application reconciles us to Labour, makes Buſineſs a perfect Pleaſure, and, in a manner, affords the Profit without the Trouble. On the contrary, Idleneſs checks the growth of Nature, benumms the Faculties, makes the Underſtanding heavy, and the Limbs unmanageable, and the whole Man awkard.

Beſides, Idleneſs and Poverty are dangerous Companions. In ſuch Caſes, where Peoples Wants are craving, and their Paſſions undiſciplin'd, they are apt to run upon a Rock. Such Circumſtances often prove fatal, tempt them to infamous Expedients, and make them a common Nuiſance. But Buſineſs reſcues from the Infection, as of ill-Thoughts, ſo of ill-Company; it guards their Vertue, it furniſhes the Houſe, and makes them ſafe and ſerviceable to the Publick.

Thoſe therefore that contribute to ſo worthy a Deſign, are Benefactors to the Nation, promote the Intereſt of the Community, and keep Poverty, Vice and Diſorder from breaking in upon us.

Since therefore *Charity* is ſuch a noble and neceſſary Vertue, ſince it hath ſuch an univerſal Influence upon the Welfare of the World, let us take eſpecial Care not to be defective in this Quality.

For *Faith*, though it makes never ſo great a noiſe, except it works by *Love* both towards God and our Neighbour, is like the Body without the Spirit, dead and inſignificant.

What

What matters it how Orthodox a Man is in his Belief, if he have nothing of the Nature of God, nothing of the Temper of Chriſt Jeſus, nothing of Goodneſs or Humanity in him. If he thinks to go to Heaven purely by the ſtrength of a Sett of Notions, and Scheme of his Thoughts, he will find himſelf miſerably out, and irrecoverably miſtaken.

Religion, without *Charity*, is good for nothing; nay, it oft makes Men more troubleſome and implacable to one another, than they would be if they believed none at all. It turns their Zeal into Fury, ſwells their Spleen, and ſets an edge upon their ill-Nature; ſo that they think they do God good ſervice, when they are killing and deſtroying one another.

It is true, it's very commendable, and our indiſpenſable Duty, *to contend for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*: But the meaning is not that we ſhould quarrel about it, but ſtand by it and maintain it with a prudent and well-govern'd Reſolution, which hath nothing contrary to the generous and benevolent Spirit of Chriſtianity,

ſtianity, nothing inconſiſtent with the Meekneſs and Gentleneſs of the Goſpel. We ought to oppoſe Innovation and Errour, though never ſo magiſterially obtruded; to be ready to quit our Temporal Intereſt, rather than deny or diſſemble the Truth. But then, if our *Charity* miſcarries in the Conteſt, if we cannot diſſent from our Neighbour without hating him, if our Spirits are imbitter'd becauſe another doth not think as we do; our being on the right Side will ſignifie little: How ſucceſsful ſoever we have been in the Diſpute, the Victory will be fatal; for though we may gain the Cauſe, we ſhall be ſure to loſe our ſelves.

We have reaſon to believe there will be great Allowances made in the Other World, for Errors in the Underſtanding, when they are involuntary, and we ſurpriz'd into them: But this know, That *Faith*, though never ſo Primitive, cannot in it ſelf atone for Cruelty and Ill-Nature: For we may as well expect that God will forgive the Devil, as thoſe who are of the ſame Temper with him.

I Con-

I Conclude all with that excellent Collect of our Church; and as She hath made it our Prayer, ſo may it ever be our Practice:

O Lord, who haſt taught us that all our doings without Charity are nothing worth; Send thy holy Ghoſt, and pour into our hearts that moſt excellent gift of Charity, the very bond of peace and of all vertues, without which whoſoever liveth is counted dead before Thee. Grant this, for thine only Son Jeſus Chriſt's ſake. Amen.

FINIS.